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Tuesday Morning, August 22, 1916

"PUNISHING" RAILROADS FOR OVERTIME

There is little difference of opinion regarding the desirability of giving the railroad men an eight-hour day. The eight-hour principle is too definitely established in American industry to need defense. The only question about it that there can be concerns the means of making it practicable, on terms fair alike to the railroads and their employees. And that is a puzzle.

The railroad industry differs from shop or building industries in that it is far more difficult to make working time conform to fixed schedules. Weather will delay trains. Accidents will occur. Tracks will become congested. Stops must be made for new and unexpected connections. And inevitably, in thousands of cases occurring every day, the men will perform be held beyond their normal time limit.

There is a further difference in that the overtime of the railroad man, unlike that of the shop worker or building tradesman, is seldom productive. He is simply waiting for the railroad machinery to start again. The road that employs him makes no profit out of that overtime service. It loses money, even when paying for it at the regular pro rata scale for a day's work.

There is the crux of the dispute between the roads and their men over the proposed "punitive" rate. The men want to make the railroads pay them "time and a half for overtime," as a penalty which by its severity will discourage the managers from keeping them overtime. They are not after the money, they say; they only want to work eight hours.

Penal overtime pay is usually efficacious in enforcing the eight-hour rule. It would doubtless have a salutary effect on the railroad managers, in making them take more pains to avoid delays and thereby avoid the need of overtime service. But it is a question how far improvement in this respect can go, and a very serious question whether it is just to penalize the railroads in cases that are beyond their control.

The Illinois state board of arbitration, in dealing with this very problem several years ago, remarked that when obliged to hold men overtime unproductively at their usual rate per hour, "the railroad companies are already penalized for the delay, and it does not seem proper to the board that in the transportation service further pecuniary penalty should be assessed."

A similar verdict was given by the arbiters in the Eastern railroad case in 1913, in these words: "In railroading it is quite evident that in many cases neither the managers nor the trainmen can prevent overtime; and it appears to the board, therefore, that punitive overtime is an unsound principle when applied to the running of trains."

It ought to be possible to find a solution fair to both the roads and the men. They are now agreed on the basic principle of an eight-hour day. Presumably the railroads will not want overtime any more than the men do, because even without the excess-pay penalty it means loss to them. With an honest trial the managers and the men ought to be able to work out a satisfactory method.

At any rate, the penalizing overtime rate should not be adopted except as a last resort, in case the railroads fail to do their part in trying to make the eight-hour day workable.

THE NATIONAL PARK

These few lines are to introduce your new playground, containing 82,800 acres. It is called "The Lassen Volcanic National Park." It is located in California, and it includes Mt. Lassen, the only active volcano in the United States. Cinder Cone, which also has shown volcanic activity, is within the park limits. The act of congress creating the national park has just been signed by the president.

It is good to see the area of natural beauty and wonder set apart for the people increasing year by year. The next region which ought to be saved for public ownership is the dune country along the southern edge of Lake Michigan. This is a unique field for geological and botanical study, and should not be allowed to be taken up for mills and factories which can just as well be placed elsewhere.

Another necessary move is to standardize and unify the national park service so that the full benefit of the people's parks may be secured for their appreciation and enjoyment.

PROTECTING THE BABIES

In and around New York City infantile paralysis still rages. Every few days there is a cheerful announcement that "the epidemic is checked," but there is no certainty of permanence in the check, and no certainty that the plague will not spread to communities yet untouched.

Slowly, but surely, it reaches out its horrible tentacles. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, all are writhing in its grip. Other states, and even other countries, have felt its breath and are rushing to put up new defenses.

The appalling consideration is not the swift deaths. These are, after all, fairly merciful. But the cripples! Five thousand of them are growing up in New York today. Some have lost the use of an arm or a leg. Many are worse than that. Some will grow up mentally deficient. Up to the present time no skill of man, no healing powers of nature, have been strong enough to cope with the destroyer.

Most of the country, fortunately, is escaping the violence of the baby plague. But is that any reason for sitting back with folded hands while it approaches? Just one thing certain has been learned about infantile paralysis. It is a filth disease. The moral is obvious.

Must cities always wait to lock the barn door after the steed has been stolen? After hundreds of charred little bodies were taken from the ruins of the school house at Collinwood, Ohio, laws were enacted to make school doors open outward. Half the schoolhouses in the country are firetraps even yet.

Must we make cripples of hundreds of our children before we learn to attend properly to our garbage and refuse? Before we insist that all the homes and all the persons of our citizens shall be kept clean? Any job however big, can be accomplished if the people will go to work, act together in harmony and stay at work until the job is done.

There are some pretty bad and dirty spots in this town right now, spots where, if the plague once got a foothold, it would take root and flourish, and whence it would spread all over the city and countryside. Do we have to wait for the stimulus of seeing the dead and crippled bodies of our children to make us clean up the city and keep it clean?

MODERN ALCHEMY

Mrs. May Whitse of Spokane, Washington, professes to be able to turn silver into gold. Recently she persuaded the assay office at Seattle to test her powers. She obtained from the office a bar of pure silver for transmutation. A few days later she returned with what she declared was a product of that same silver. The assayer reported that it consisted of "some globules of metal coated with a strongly adherent non-metallic material." The mixture, he said, on careful analysis, "gave a faint reaction for gold," but not enough to convince him. He concluded that Mrs. Whitse had "failed to show that she is able to change silver into gold."

The mere fact, however, that an official of the United States government took such a claim seriously enough to test it shows the new attitude of scientific men toward the ancient art of alchemy. People used to believe that baser metals could be turned into gold—it was merely a question of finding the secret. Then, with the dawn of modern science, came incredulity. Alchemy was classed with the quest for perpetual motion as an absurdity. The pursuit of it was ultimately considered ipso facto evidence of mental unsoundness. But today the pendulum has swung back again. The latest science, like the old tradition, holds that all substances are at bottom the same, and that there is no inherent improbability in man's being able to turn one element into another.

There is a scientist and inventor of recognized standing in Philadelphia who maintains that he has possessed the alchemist's secret for many years. He can make gold, he says, at a cost of 10 cents on the dollar. Hitherto, however, he has conscientiously refrained from applying his knowledge, for fear of upsetting the world's values. Imagine the economic confusion that would result if a few billion dollars in gold were suddenly dumped into the stream of finance!

HEALTHFUL WORK

Work is the great generator of health, remarked Gov. Ferris of Michigan before a large assembly of people the other day. He added that outside of work no genuine enjoyment could be found, and begged his hearers to work if they wanted to be happy.

It's an old saying in this connection that machines will rust out long before they wear out. And a further truth is that they frequently wear out before their time because they are not properly oiled and cared for.

Happy, wholesome work, with due measure of rest, play and good food, never injured anyone. But work overdone, work without its proper balance of rest and care, frequently does injury. And above all, work in surroundings which cause friction, work under conditions of mental inharmoniousness, is damaging. Even in these cases, however, it's not the work which hurts. It's the friction or the lack of poise.

If you are working under conditions which are wearing out your body and soul, if you are uncomfortable and unhappy about it, look sharply for the cause. Is it your own pretty, grumbling, dissatisfied attitude which is making the trouble? If so, change your habit of thought, and do it quick. If the friction is caused by circumstances over which you have no control, get out and find another job. You won't be idle half so long as if you are forced into idleness by illness.

If you would be well, work cheerfully.

"Everybody knows we did not begin this war," says Premier Tisza of Hungary. Of course not! The very ideal! When will an ignorant world get over the fool idea that Austria-Hungary ever had anything to do with the war?

Like an Open Book For Young Mothers!



Most women look upon becoming a mother, for the first time, as something full of unknown mysteries; agony and pain; a time of distressing days and months. These are misguided conclusions. "Mother's Friend," used daily before confinement, will prove its great value as an ally to those distressing pains and assist nature in doing its work with ease and comfort. Get "Mother's Friend" at your druggist.

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